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ord.
selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 15, and SEQ ID NO: 18.

REMARKS

Claims 82 and 88 are canceled. Please note that claims 86 and 89 were canceled in the Amendment filed October 18, 2001. Claims 69 and 80 have been amended. Upon entry of the instant amendment, claims 69, 80, 84, 85, 87, and 90 are pending and presented for reconsideration. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment does not introduce new matter and is made without any intention to abandon the subject matter as filed, but with the intention that claims of the same, greater, or lesser scope may be filed in a continuing application. A marked-up copy of the amended claims and a clean copy of the claims as amended is attached herewith for the Examiner's convenience.

Acknowledgements

Applicants acknowledge that the Examiner has withdrawn the previous objections and rejections relating to:

- (i) The objection to claims 69, 80, 82, 84-86 and 88 for not using a colon after SEQ ID NO.
- (ii) The rejection of claims 87 and 90 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's Advisory information stating that claims 84-87 are free of prior art and that nucleotide sequences set forth in SEQ ID NOS: 2, 15, and 18 and amino acid sequences set forth in SEQ ID NOS: 1 and 16 are free of prior art. Please note that claim 86 was canceled in the amendment filed October 18, 2001.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 69, 80, 82, 88 and 90 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over Anderson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,017,729). Not in acquiescence of the rejection but in order to expedite prosecution of the case, Applicants have amended claims 69 and 80 to remove recitation of SEQ ID NOs: 17 and 19 and have canceled claims 82 and 88, thereby rendering the Examiner's rejection of those claims moot.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

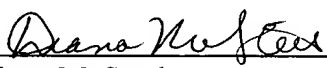
The Examiner has rejected claims 80 and 84-90 under §112, second paragraph, contending that claim 80 is vague and indefinite. The Examiner suggested that the claim be amended to recite "An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding an OCIF-binding protein, said nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ. ID NO: 15, SEQ ID NO: 18 and SEQ ID NO:19." Please note that claims 86 and 89 were canceled in the amendment filed October 18, 2001 and that therefore the rejection of those claims is moot. Regarding the rejections of claims 80, 84-85, 87 and 90, Applicants have amended claim 80 to incorporate the Examiner's suggestion. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection to claim 80 and dependent claims 84-85, 87, and 90.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all claims as amended are allowable and respectfully request early and favorable action by the Examiner. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with the undersigned would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: May 3, 2002



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MARKED-UP VERSION OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS

- (Thrice Amended) A purified and isolated Osteoclastogenesis Inhibitory Factor (OCIF) binding protein comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1[, and SEQ ID NO: 16, [and SEQ ID NO: 17,] wherein said OCIF-binding protein promotes osteoclast differentiation and maturation.
80. (Thrice Amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding an OCIF-binding protein, said nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 15, and SEQ ID NO: 18[, and SEQ ID NO: 19].